



Parshas Vayekhel Parshas Shekalim

For the week ending 29 Adar I 5757
7 & 8 March 1997

This issue is sponsored Hershel Kulefsky, Attorney at Law, 15 Park Row, New York, NY 10038, 1-212-693-1671

Overview

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts the *Bnei Yisrael* to keep Shabbos, and requests donations for the materials for the construction of the *Mishkan* (tent of meeting). He collects gold, silver, precious stones, animal skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the *Menorah* and for anointing. The Princes of each of the twelve tribes bring the precious stones for the *Kohen Gadol's* breastplate and *Ephod*. Hashem appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen for the building of the *Mishkan* and its vessels. The *Bnei Yisrael* contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed to serve as the material for the *Mishkan's* roof and door. Gold-covered boards set in silver bases were connected and formed the walls of the *Mishkan*. Betzalel made the *Aron HaKodesh* (Ark), which contained the Tablets of the Covenant, from wood that was covered with gold on the inside and outside. On the cover of the Ark were two small figures facing each other with wings arching over the Ark. The *Menorah* and the *Shulchan*, the table with the showbreads were also made of gold. Two Altars were made: A smaller one for burning incense, made of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger Altar for the purpose of sacrifices that was made of wood that was covered with copper.

Insights

NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

“And every man came whose heart was lifted up.” (35:21)

Imagine turning up at a spotless hi-tech computer plant and offering your services to build computer chips.

Each chip is no more than a few millimeters square and yet it contains millions of transistors and is capable of making millions of calculations in the time it takes you to say “I’m looking for a job.”

They say to you: “Fine. What experience do you have?”

You say “None. But I know in my heart that I can build all the chips you need.”

“Yeah, look there’s a food factory down the block. Why don’t you try over there. Maybe you’d be better off frying their chips than ours...”

When the Children of Israel left Egypt, they had been slaves in Egypt for 210 years. The only skills that they had developed in those years of apprenticeship were how to stir mortar and *schlep* stones. Not exactly an ideal training ground for the extremely high degree of craftsmanship necessary for the building of the *Mishkan*.

Where was their training as carpenters, embroiderers, metal-smiths, sculptors, weavers?

And yet they came to Moshe and said “Whatever my lord commands, we will do it.” And they did it.

The *Mishkan* performed the incredibly complex task of uniting Heaven and Earth. But because it was a spiritual building, all it needed was the desire of its builders to serve Hashem, and then Hashem, as it were, filled in the rest of their resumé.

When we want to serve Hashem, to be good Jews and good people, we should remember that no previous experience is required, just a heart that’s uplifted.

ROOM AT THE BOTTOM

“The Keruvim (Cherubs)...with their faces toward one another” (37:9)

The *Mishkan* and later the *Beis Hamikdash* represented the ‘marriage’ of the Jewish People and Hashem. The *Keruvim* that were carved from the top of the cover of the Holy Ark were like a barometer which showed the state of this marriage.

When there was *shalom bayis* — ‘marital harmony’ — between the Creator and His people, the *Keruvim* faced towards each other, but when the Jewish People strayed and were unfaithful, the faces of the *Keruvim* were turned in opposite directions.

The Mishna is Avos tells us that on Yom Kippur when everyone stood in the courtyard of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it was jam-packed. You could hardly move an inch. But when time came to prostrate themselves in prayer, there was plenty of room for all.

The same can be said about the marriage of a man and a woman: If a person ‘stands’ — if he stands on his dignity, if he stands only for himself, if he stands proud with his head high — then matrimony can be very crowding. You can’t move an inch.

But if a person lowers himself, prostrating his own interests beneath those of his spouse, then there is plenty of room for everyone.

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1997 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

ohr@virtual.co.il

38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

Somayach@MSN.com

Dedication opportunities are available for Torah Weekly — Please contact us for details.

Parshas Vayekhel — 29 Adar I 5757, 7 & 8 March 1997

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

HITTING THE MARK, OR MARKING THE HIT?

"...ten curtains of linen, twisted with turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool..." (36:8)

Why is it that The Torah sometimes seems so repetitive?

In this week's *Parsha* the Torah lists in extensive detail exactly the same description of the *Mishkan* and its furnishings as it did in *Parshas Terumah*.

Why the need for the repetition?

The Dubner Maggid was famous for his *meshalim* (parables) which always hit the bull's eye. With a short story he could illuminate a Torah idea, lighting up the eyes and the minds of all who listened.

The Vilna Gaon once asked him how it was that he was able to tell such wonderfully telling parables that always seemed to hit the mark. The Dubner Maggid replied with another *meshal*:

There once was a prince who desired greatly to become a master archer. One day while he was traveling he came to a small village. An archery contest was in progress. The prince noticed that one of the contestant's accuracy was almost uncanny. Each of his targets was pierced exactly in the center.

The prince asked this fellow how he was able to achieve such striking results. This was his reply: "Well first I aim at a tree.

Then, once I hit the tree, I run up to it and paint circles around the arrow."

Said the Dubner Maggid to the Vilna Gaon: "I do the same. First of all I find an interesting story, then I look for a relevant verse or Torah thought to which to attach it."

In much the same way, this is what Hashem did when He brought the universe into being. First of all He 'wrote' the *meshal* — the Torah — and then He looked into it and created the world.

The Torah is the blueprint of the world. But more than an architect's blueprint which is lifeless, the Torah is the dynamo, the source of the spiritual energy, that keeps the world turning.

A fluorescent light may consume only a few watts, whereas an air-conditioning unit will need several thousand.

In the same way, the 'spiritual electricity' of one Torah verse alone was enough to sustain all the creatures of the sea: "*Let the waters teem with teeming living creatures...*" (*Bereishis* 1:20)

However, the *Mishkan* which was Hashem's 'dwelling place' in this world, required the 'spiritual current' of a much higher order.

This is the reason there are so many verses in the Torah which refer to the *Mishkan*. Every verse in its description is like another volt, and watt.

Haftorah for Parshas Shekalim: Melachim II Chapter 11

In the months of Adar and Nissan, we read four special passages of the Torah. Each is accompanied by its own special Haftorah. The Torah portions are to help us prepare for Purim and ultimately for Pesach. The four passages are: *Parshas Shekalim* which deals with the collection of the compulsory half-shekel for offerings in the *Beis Hamikdash*; *Parshas Zachor*, to remember the mitzva of eradicating the memory of Amalek, who attacked the Jewish People after the Exodus from Egypt; *Parshas Parah*, which details the laws of how a person can purify himself from the spiritual impurity that results from contact with the dead; and finally, *Parshas HaChodesh*, the mitzva of the sanctification of the new moon.

WHEN 1/2 IS GREATER THAN 10,000

The Midrash (*Eliyahu Rabba*) tells us that Hashem knew that in the month of Adar, Haman would offer Achashverosh, king of Persia, 10,000 *kikar* of silver if he would agree to the genocide of the Jewish People.

Thus, in 'anticipation' of Haman's plan, Hashem gave the Jewish People the merit of the mitzvah of the half-shekel donation to the *Beis Hamikdash* a thousand years before Haman's plot.

It was this half-shekel, given in the service of the Creator, which outweighed all of Haman's 10,000 *kikar* of silver, and led to the salvation of the Jewish People in the time of Purim.

WHEN 1/2 IS LESS THAN 100%

Why was it that specifically a half-shekel was given, and not a whole shekel?

A Jew must understand that alone he is only half the picture. Without his attachment to the community, he can never reach a state of completeness.

For Hashem has established His relationship between Himself and His *people*. A Jew has to look at himself as a 'half-shekel.' He only becomes whole when he links himself to the body of the Jewish People.

Sources:
"No Previous Experience Required" - Ramban; Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram
"Room At The Bottom" - V.S.
"Hitting The Mark, or Marking The Hit?" - Rabbi Mordechai Perlman



INSIGHTS INTO THE ZEMIROS
SUNG AT THE SHABBOS TABLE
THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS.

ELIJAH HANAVI - תחבב ונחט
"ELIJAH THE PROPHET..."

"He will return the hearts of the fathers concerning their children" ohbcv kg ` uct ck chavu v'hashiv lav avos al habanim

Eliyahu Hanavi, our Sages tell us (*Bava Metziah* 84b), has the responsibility of regularly waking up the Patriarchs Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov for prayers and then putting them back to rest. One Rosh Chodesh he arrived late in the yeshiva of Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi, and explained that he had been delayed by the need to wake each one separately and wait for him to finish his prayers before waking the others. "Why not wake all three together and save time?" he was asked. "Rosh Chodesh is a time particularly suited for praying for the arrival of Mashiach" he replied, "and if all three Avos would pray together, there would be a danger that they would bring the redeemer before the time had come." In our song about Eliyahu we express the confidence that when the time for redemption approaches, he will be given heavenly permission to "return the hearts of the fathers" by enabling them to pray together for the redemption of their children.

Parshas Vayekhel For the week ending 29 Adar I 5757, 7 & 8 March 1997

Torah Weekly is available from several sources: • World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il> • Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America . Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details. • E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub weekly {your full name}" to lstproc@virtual.co.il

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.